

# Auditor's Annual Report

North East Combined Authority –  
year ended 31 March 2022

November 2023



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# 01

## Section 01: **Introduction**

# 1. Introduction

## Purpose of the Auditor’s Annual Report

Our Auditor’s Annual Report (AAR) summarises the work we have undertaken as the auditor for North East Combined Authority (NECA) for the year ended 31 March 2022. Although this report is addressed to NECA, it is designed to be read by a wider audience including members of the public and other external stakeholders.

Our responsibilities are defined by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice (‘the Code’) issued by the National Audit Office (‘the NAO’). The remaining sections of the AAR outline how we have discharged these responsibilities and the findings from our work. These are summarised below.



### Opinion on the financial statements

We issued our audit report on 28 November 2023. Our opinion on the financial statements was unqualified.



### Value for Money arrangements

In our audit report issued on 28 November 2023 we reported that we had completed our work on NECA’s arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and had not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements or recommendations to report.



### Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)

The NAO, as group auditor, requires us to complete the WGA Assurance Statement in respect of its consolidation data and to carry out certain tests on the data. We expect to report on WGA before the end of November 2023. As for 2020/21, we anticipate a significant delay before we will be able to issue our audit certificate, as we await NAO clearance on whether we will be required to undertake additional procedures as a sampled component.



### Wider reporting responsibilities

The 2014 Act requires us to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question us about the accounting records of NECA and to consider any objection made to the accounts. No such correspondence from electors has been received.



# 02

Section 02:

## **Audit of the financial statements**

# 2. Audit of the financial statements

## The scope of our audit and the results of our opinion

Our audit was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code, and International Standards on Auditing (ISAs).

The purpose of our audit is to provide reasonable assurance to users that the financial statements are free from material error. We do this by expressing an opinion on whether the statements are prepared, in all material respects, in line with the financial reporting framework applicable to NECA and whether they give a true and fair view of NECA and Group's financial position as at 31 March 2022 and of its financial performance for the year then ended.

Our audit report, issued on 28 November 2023, gave an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

## Qualitative aspects of NECA's accounting practices

We reviewed NECA's accounting policies and disclosures and concluded they comply with the 2021/22 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, appropriately tailored to NECA's circumstances.

## Significant difficulties during the audit

We had positive co-operation from management throughout the audit and we would like to thank management for their assistance, courtesy and patience during our work.

There was a national issue in relation to accounting for infrastructure which impacted on every local authority related entity with material infrastructure balances in the 2021/22 audit. This led to a substantial delay in the audit. Although this issue was resolved early in 2023, with a statutory override put in place and revised guidance from CIPFA, a further issue arose.

The new national issue related to the impact of the delay in 2021/22 audit work, initially caused by the infrastructure issue, and then exacerbated in NECA's case by a delay in receiving the Pension Fund Auditor Assurance letter until 24 March 2023 (the Pension Fund auditor is a different audit firm to Mazars). This meant that the triennial revaluation of the Tyne & Wear Pension Fund as at 31 March 2022 was now available as more up-to-date information for management to reflect in the 2021/22 financial statements.

The way forward took a little time to confirm as the situation was unprecedented, and added further to what had already been a considerable delay in completing the audit.

The way forward was then agreed that:

- Authorities (including NECA) were to obtain updated IAS19 valuation reports and amend the 2021/22 financial statements for the new figures; and
- Pension Fund auditors were to complete testing on the reliability and accuracy of the updated pension fund membership data.

Although this work was eventually completed, it explains the delays and the additional costs relating to the 2021/22 audit.

# 03

Section 03:

**Commentary on VFM arrangements**

### 3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

#### Overall summary





# 3. VFM arrangements – Overall summary

## Approach to value for money arrangements work

We are required to consider whether NECA has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The National Audit Office (NAO) issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out and sets out the reporting criteria that we are required to consider. The reporting criteria are:



**Financial sustainability** – how NECA plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services.



**Governance** - how NECA ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks.



**Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness** - how NECA uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

Our work is carried out in three main phases.

### Phase 1 - Planning and risk assessment

At the planning stage of the audit, we undertake work so we can understand the arrangements that NECA has in place under each of the reporting criteria; as part of this work we may identify risks of significant weaknesses in those arrangements.

We obtain our understanding of arrangements for each of the specified reporting criteria using a variety of information sources which may include:

- NAO guidance and supporting information;
- information from internal and external sources including regulators;
- knowledge from previous audits and other audit work undertaken in the year; and
- interviews and discussions.

Although we describe this work as planning work, we keep our understanding of arrangements under review and update our risk assessment throughout the audit to reflect emerging issues that may suggest there are further risks of significant weaknesses.

### Phase 2 - Additional risk-based procedures and evaluation

Where we identify risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements, we design a programme of work to enable us to decide whether there are actual significant weaknesses in arrangements. We use our professional judgement and have regard to guidance issued by the NAO in determining the extent to which an identified weakness is significant.

We did not identify a risk of significant weakness in NECA's arrangements for 2021/22.

### Phase 3 - Reporting the outcomes of our work and our recommendations

We are required to provide a summary of the work we have undertaken and the judgments we have reached against each of the specified reporting criteria in this Auditor's Annual Report. We do this as part of our commentary on VFM arrangements which we set out for each criteria later in this section.

We also make recommendations where we identify weaknesses in arrangements or other matters that require attention from NECA. We refer to two distinct types of recommendation through the remainder of this report:

- **Recommendations arising from significant weaknesses in arrangements**  
We make these recommendations for improvement where we have identified a significant weakness in NECA's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Where such significant weaknesses in arrangements are identified, we report these (and our associated recommendations) at any point during the course of the audit.
- **Other recommendations**  
We make other recommendations when we identify areas for potential improvement or weaknesses in arrangements which we do not consider to be significant but which still require action to be taken.

The table on the following page summarises the outcomes of our work against each reporting criteria, including whether we have identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements or made other recommendations

# 3. VFM arrangements – overall summary

## Overall summary by reporting criteria

Reporting criteria	Commentary page reference	Identified risks of significant weakness?	Actual significant weaknesses identified?	Other recommendations made?
 Financial sustainability	11	No	No	No
 Governance	14	No	No	No
 Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness	18	No	No	No

### 3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

#### Financial Sustainability

How the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services



# 3. VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

## Risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements

We identified no risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements.

## Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria

### How NECA identifies significant financial pressures that are relevant to its short and medium-term plans

The North East Combined Authority (the Authority) covers the Local Authorities of Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

The 2021/22 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), covering the period up to and including 2023/24 was approved by the Leadership Team on 2 February 2021 and is available on the Authority's website.

Due to Transport being of such a strategic importance to the North East, collaborative working of both Combined Authorities allows effective decision making across the region, which helps to ensure that the local needs and priorities are delivered. This resulted in the introduction of the North East Joint Transport Committee (JTC) which brings together all seven of the Constituent Authorities of the region, being the four Members from the North East Combined Authority and three Members from the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) in accordance with the Order that was created on the 2nd November 2018.

Regular budget monitoring reports are presented to the Authority's Leadership Board and JTC throughout the year. These reports monitor financial pressures and delivery of savings to help ensure that the Authority remains within budget. The Authority's Leadership Board (NELB) reports are agreed by the constituent authorities Chief Executives and are scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In addition, JTC reports are agreed with the Transport North East Senior Officers Oversight Group, the Transport Strategy Board and are scrutinised by JTC Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

As at 31 March 2022, the Authority reported useable reserves of £80.9 million in the draft accounts.

A timetable for the production and consultation of the 2022/23 Revenue Budget/MTFS was in place and builds in financial information from JTC's delivery bodies (Nexus, Durham, Northumberland) as well as the Transport Strategy Unit and Tyne Tunnels.

### How NECA plans to bridge its funding gaps and identifies achievable savings

The annual budget/MTFS process sets out the Authority's spending plans over the period and how any funding gaps will be met. This process is developed through working with key delivery partners for public transport services (the Authority, Durham and Northumberland) and the constituent local authorities of the Authority and the JTC.

Regular budget monitoring/forecast of outturn reports highlight any financial pressures developing, allowing action to be taken at an early stage.

### How NECA plans finances to support the sustainable delivery of services in accordance with strategic and statutory priorities

The budget development process enables resources to be identified to support the delivery of services in accordance with the strategic priorities of the Authority and the JTC. This is developed through working with key delivery partners for public transport services (the Authority, Durham, Northumberland) and the constituent local authorities of the Authority and the JTC.

# 3. VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

## Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria - continued

### How NECA ensures that its financial plan is consistent with other plans

Consultation on budget proposals is built into Part 4.4 (Budget and Policy Framework Rules of Procedure) of the Authority's Constitution (updated June 2022) and aims to ensure that appropriate and effective consultation takes place with all Members and other stakeholders on the content of the Budget.

In line with the Prudential Code, revenue implications of capital investment decisions are fully considered and form part of the budget setting process ensuring that investments are fully funded – e.g. agreement of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) strategy.

The annual budget/MTFS report considers relevant implications including resources, equality, legal, human rights and risks as part of the approval process.

### How NECA identifies and manages risks to financial resilience, e.g. unplanned changes in demand, including challenge of the assumptions underlying its plans

There is an established risk management framework for the Authority and the JTC with regular reviews and reporting to the Authority's Audit & Standards Committee and JTC Audit Committee. This includes risks to financial resilience. Support is provided to the Authority by Sunderland City Council through a service level agreement.

As set out in the Risk Management Policy and Strategy Framework, Designated Officers are responsible for ensuring that risk management is an integral part of their management processes and activities within their respective areas of responsibility.

Budget managers have direct access to the financial management system for up-to-date financial information but also get the support of the Authority's finance officers. The Authority uses Durham County Council's (DCC) financial systems. DCC has been streamlining its financial systems which are continuously being developed to meet the need of service users and to enable the Authority to meet internal deadlines and statutory reporting. Systems have been developed to enable more up-to-date budget information to be obtained from Service budget managers and finance staff.

Revenue Budget Monitoring/Forecast of Outturn reports are brought to the Leadership board and JTC on a regular basis for challenge and comment before subsequently being reported to the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief Finance Officer and Finance Manager are part of the Transport North East (TNE) Senior Officers Oversight Group which meets monthly to discuss TNE service and budget issues with the JTC Statutory Officers. There is a monthly meeting with all TNE budget managers and the Authority's Finance Manager to discuss any service and budget issues.

Financial Management Standards support the Authority's Financial Regulations set out in the Constitution. The Financial Regulations provide the overall high-level framework for managing the authority's financial affairs, and Financial Procedure Notes set out in more detail how these procedures are implemented to embed sound financial management across the authority.

The 2021/22 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), covering the period up to and including 2023/24 was approved by the Leadership Team on 2 February 2021 and is available on the Authority's website.

The Authority has a history of achieving financial targets as evidenced by financial and performance reports.

The 2021/22 Outturn position identified an underspend of £2.329 million at the year end.

Relevant HR policies and procedures are in place.

### North East Devolution

The leaders of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland councils have agreed to a devolution deal which the Government has confirmed.

This new combined authority will be led by a Mayor elected by residents across the area, and together with one representative from each of the seven constituent councils will form a Cabinet which will make decisions for the new combined authority.

The North East mayoral election is due to be held on 2 May 2024 to elect the mayor of the North East and the North East Mayoral Combined Authority is due to come into existence 4 days after the completion of this election. The authority will replace the North of Tyne and the North East Combined Authorities.



### 3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

#### Governance

How the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks



# 3. VFM arrangements – Governance

## Risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements

We identified no risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements.

## Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria

### How NECA monitors and assesses risk and how NECA gains assurance over the effective operation of internal controls, including arrangements to prevent and detect fraud

The Authority has an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy in place and seeks in the first instance to prevent fraud and corruption through staffing policies, making members aware of their responsibilities, internal control systems and liaison with outside agencies.

The Authority is a participant in the National Fraud Initiative, a data matching exercise that helps prevent and detect fraud across the public sector.

The Authority endeavours to deal effectively with fraud and corruption, misuse of power and breaches of legal and regulatory provisions. They also seek to align the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives, as well as evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis.

The Authority uses an Internal Audit service provided by Sunderland City Council. They produce a risk-based Internal Audit plan to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the authority's goals.

Internal audit reviews highlight weaknesses and recommend action when required to strengthen process/procedures. These are regularly reported to Audit Committee.

### How NECA approaches and carries out its annual budget setting process

The Constitution (updated June 2022) sets out the Authority's budget setting process, including in its role as accountable body for the JTC. This must be followed to ensure that appropriate and effective consultation takes place with all Members and other stakeholders on the content of the Budget and that it is agreed in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution and the JTC Standing Orders.

Outline proposals are developed in discussion with member and officer groups, In addition, Finance Directors across the Authority area will be involved throughout the process.

Proposals made by the JTC, in relation to levies and the distribution of those levies to the Constituted Authorities and Combined Authorities, will be considered by the Leadership Board. The Leadership Board also consider the funding necessary to discharge the functions of the Authority and make proposals for the funding of the Authority taking into account the JTC's proposals or decisions in relation to the levies and the wider transport budget.

Once the consultation process has been completed, details of the finalised proposals will be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee together with the relevant background information on which the proposals have been based. It is the responsibilities of the Chair of the Leadership Board and relevant officers to ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has sufficient background information to enable it to evaluate the proposals against that background information.

The proposals will then be referred back to the Leadership Board, together with any recommendations and/or observations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The final proposals (including consideration of the final proposals and decision of the JTC) will then be considered by the Leadership Board, which may or may not include the recommendations and/or observations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Leadership Board must agree the final proposals in relation to the Authority's budget unanimously. The JTC must approve the final proposals in relation to the North East Transport Budget unanimously.

The 2021/22 opinion of the Chief Internal Auditor, based on the internal audit work undertaken in year, was that there was an adequate and effective framework of governance, risk management and control.

# 3. VFM arrangements – Governance

## Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria - continued

### How NECA ensures effective processes and systems are in place to ensure budgetary control

Quarterly forecasts of outturn reports were presented to the Chief Officers' Group, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees during the 2021/22 financial year. The reports included details of movements in the budget between quarters and remedial measures taken. These did not indicate a weakness in monitoring and reporting arrangements.

Our audit of the financial statements did not identify any matters to indicate a significant weakness in the accuracy of the financial information reported or the process for preparing the accounts. It is our experience that management takes action to address audit matters in a timely and appropriate manner.

### How NECA ensures it makes properly informed decisions, supported by appropriate evidence and allowing for challenge and transparency

There is an up to date Constitution (June 2022) in place which is available on the website.

Principles of decision making are set out in the Authority's constitution and all decisions are made in accordance with these. Report templates are set out to prompt consideration of each of the principles/implications of the decision under consideration.

The Authority has an Overview and Scrutiny Committee established to enable local councillors, on behalf of their communities, to scrutinise and challenge all matters within the remit of the Combined Authority. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also investigates matters of significant importance to residents within the areas covered by the four councils with a view to influencing decisions made in respect of all matters within the remit of the Combined Authority.

There is also an established JTC Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which also enables local councillors to scrutinise and challenge the JTC, its committees and the Authority, and to investigate matters of strategic importance to residents within the LA7 Area (being the 5 Councils of Tyne and Wear along with Durham and Northumberland Counties) with a view to influencing and adding value to the decisions.

The North East Leadership Board is made up of the Leaders of the four constituent bodies and is supplemented by elected members who serve on a number of committees along with non-executives.

The Authority publishes a Forward Plan which lists all decisions that committees or officers of the Authority intend to take in the coming months. Details of each are usually included 28 days before the report is considered and any decision is taken. This allows an opportunity for people to find out about major decisions that the Combined Authority is planning to take, to review any related reports and background papers, and to submit comments to the decision maker in advance of the decision being made.

Briefings for members are held between key public meetings to discuss particular topics in depth and allow for challenge and informed decision making by members of committees such as the Joint Transport Committee and the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee.

The Authority's Leadership Board receive appropriate and regular reports on the financial position of the Authority.

The Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive leads a very experienced senior officer team at the Authority.

Risk management arrangements along with an up-to-date risk register are in place. A risk update is reported regularly to the Audit and Standards Committee, who provide challenge in this area.

An annual governance statement is prepared, reviewed and approved before being included in the financial statements.



# 3. VFM arrangements – Governance

## Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria - continued

### How NECA monitors and ensures appropriate standards are maintained

The Authority's constitution sets out the how the authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that the Authority operates efficiently, effectively and is both transparent and accountable.

The Authority has an agreed Code of Conduct for Members which sets out the conduct that is expected of elected members appointed to the Authority when they are acting in that capacity, and which is consistent with Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life.

In addition, the Authority has a Code of Conduct for Officers which is intended to support officers in maintaining standards and to help protect officers from misunderstanding or criticism. The Code applies to all officers of the Authority.

A Member/Officer Relations Protocol tis also in place o provide general guidance for Members and Officers in their relations with one another. It reflects the basic principles underlying the respective rules of conduct that apply to Members and Officers and is intended to offer guidance on some of the issues that commonly arise.

With the exception of co-opted Independent Members on the Audit & Standards and Overview & Scrutiny Committees, Members are elected councillors of constituent local authorities and also subject to their own Council's Codes of Conduct.

The Authority has an Audit and Standards Committee, which seeks to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Authority's members and co-opted members, and ensure the Authority's members and co-opted members observe the Members' Code of Conduct.

An Authority Register of Members Interests is in place which contains declarations of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and any other interest. These are published on the Authority website and must be registered within 28 days of appointment as a member of the Authority or any change taking place. Non-registerable interests in an item of business must be disclosed by members to the meeting before consideration of that item begins, and this is a standing item on the meeting agendas. Interests for Senior Officers are also recorded

### 3. Commentary on VFM arrangements

#### Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

How the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services



# 3. VFM arrangements – Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

## Risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements

We identified no risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements.

## Overall commentary on the Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness reporting criteria

### How financial and performance information has been used to assess performance to identify areas for improvement

The Narrative Report accompanying the Statement of Accounts includes key financial performance information to help inform users of the accounts.

Final Outturn reports build on the quarterly reporting during the year to set out financial performance against budget for the Authority and JTC for both revenue budgets and Capital Programme. The outturn is used to update the forecasts for the year as part of the regular forecast of outturn reports.

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators are set and updated through the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy, mid-year update and outturn update..

### How NECA evaluates the services it provides to assess performance and identify areas for improvement

Durham County Council and Northumberland County Council report to the JTC on the Discharge of Transport Functions setting out performance against the Transport Functions delegated to them by the JTC.

The Authority report to the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee on its performance against its agreed Corporate Plan priorities.

The new Transport Plan for the whole JTC area sets out Key Performance Indicators that are designed to monitor the overall progress of the Transport Plan with respect to the 5 key objectives (Carbon neutral North East, Overcome inequality and grow our economy, Healthier North East, Sustainable transport choices and Safe, secure network).

### How NECA ensures it delivers its role within significant partnerships, engages with stakeholders it has identified, monitors performance against expectations, and ensures action is taken where necessary to improve

The Authority’s Constitution sets out that the Procurement Procedure Rules for the Constituent Authority designated as lead authority for the following exercises shall apply and be followed wherever the Combined Authority wishes to arrange for:

- The purchases of goods, materials and related services;
- The execution of works; or
- The provision of other services (including consultancy).

The Authority receives procurement services from Durham County Council via a Service Level Agreement. The service specification includes the undertaking of legally compliant procurement and production of procurement documentation and correspondence via competitive quote/tender process.

All Procurement staff are either fully qualified or studying for Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply to ensure the highest performance standards are achieved and is the first Council team to achieve the CIPS Corporate Ethics Standard.

A service concession exists in relation to the Tyne Tunnel. This is subject to a detailed 30 year agreement with the operator TT2 Ltd which was introduced in 2008. The partnership with TT2 Ltd is governed by the Project Agreement which specifies levels of performance which must be met and roles and responsibilities of both partners, and is managed by the Tyne Tunnels Contract Manager.

# 3. VFM arrangements – Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

## Overall commentary on the Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness reporting criteria - continued

How NECA ensures it delivers its role within significant partnerships, engages with stakeholders it has identified, monitors performance against expectations, and ensures action is taken where necessary to improve - continued

The Authority works very closely with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP). This is a business-led, strategic partnership responsible for promoting and developing economic growth in the area. The Authority supports the work of the enterprise partnership and they work together to ensure co-ordination across their range of activities.

The NELEP Board includes representatives from across the private and public sectors. Each of the leaders and the elected Mayor representing the seven local authorities councils that are members of the NELEP and the Chair of the NELEP is a non-voting member of the NELB.

The Combined Authority provides the formal accountability arrangements for the local enterprise partnership

There is a register which sets out associated partners to the Authority, the purpose of the partnerships, link officer and review dates for each one.

Nexus is not included in the significant partner register due to its status as an officer of the Combined Authority. The Authority reports regularly to the Joint Transport Committee and the Tyne and Wear Sub Committee on its financial performance, and performance against its Corporate Business Plan and Risk Register. The relationship between the Authority and Nexus is set out in the Constitution.

# 04

Section 04:

**Other reporting responsibilities and  
our fees**

## 4. Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

### Matters we report by exception

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 provides auditors with specific powers where matters come to our attention that, in their judgement, require specific reporting action to be taken. Auditors have the power to:

- issue a report in the public interest;
- make statutory recommendations that must be considered and responded to publicly;
- apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to the law; and
- issue an advisory notice.

We have not exercised any of these statutory reporting powers.

The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account. We did not receive any such objections or questions.

### Reporting to the National Audit Office (NAO) in respect of Whole of Government Accounts consolidation data

The NAO, as group auditor, requires us to complete the WGA Assurance Statement in respect of its consolidation data and to carry out certain tests on the data. We expect to report on WGA before the end of November 2023.

As for 2020/21, we anticipate a significant delay before we will be able to issue our audit certificate, as we await NAO clearance on whether we will be required to undertake additional procedures as a sampled component.

# 4. Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

## Fees for work as the Authority's auditor

We reported our proposed fees for the delivery of our work under the Code of Audit Practice in our Audit Strategy Memorandum presented to the Audit and Standards Committee in September 2022. Now we have completed the 2021/22 audit, we can confirm our final fees, which include additional costs arising from the national infrastructure issue and the ongoing issues in relation to pensions.

Area of work	2021/22 fees	2020/21 fees
Planned fee in respect of our work under the Code of Audit Practice	£18,709	£18,709
Additional fees in respect of the new VFM approach (recurring)	£7,500	£7,500
Additional fees in respect of new ISA540 requirements in relation to Accounting estimates and related disclosures (recurring)	£2,500	£2,500
Additional fees in respect of resolving the national infrastructure issue (these costs have been divided equally between 2020/21 and 2021/22 audits) – this cost is non-recurring	£5,000	£5,000
Additional fees in respect of the delays in Pension Fund auditor assurance and the need for revised pensions figures for the triennial revaluation – this cost is non-recurring	£5,000	£nil
Total fees	£38,709	£33,709

All fees are subject to VAT. All additional fees are subject to Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) approval.

## Fees for other work

We did not undertake any non-audit services in 2021/22.

# Gavin Barker, Director

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## **Mazars**

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